

## Language Choice and Attitude in Sumatran-Javanese Intermarriage Families in Relation to Language Maintenance in Lubuklinggau

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research was to find out (1) language chosen by intermarriage Sumatran-Javanese community in Lubuklinggau, (2) the language attitudes that affect language maintenance toward parents' languages and (3) the factors that determine the language choice. It was a sociolinguistic research with descriptive qualitative method. The subject of the research was 100 people that were chosen by purposive data sampling. In collecting the data, interview and questionnaire were used by the researcher. The result showed that Palembang Malay Lubuklinggau dialect (PMLD) had highest number of speakers in family and friendship domain. Meanwhile, Indonesian language was the highest used in non-casual domain such as religion, education, employment and public domain. Due to the choice, attitude presented by the informants was negative attitude proved by the less pride, lack of awareness and lack of loyalty toward parents' language that result the less effort to maintain parents' first language. The factors that determine the language choice among intermarriage Sumatran-Javanese community in Lubuklinggau were to show identity, the effect of environmental force, the effect of community and workplace force, participants and setting, topic and language status/prestige.

**Keywords:** Intermarriage, Sumatran-Javanese, language choice, language attitude, maintenance

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### INTRODUCTION

Intermarriage is a common phenomenon of acculturation in Indonesia which derives from the diversity of culture, language and tribes. Intermarriage has important role in language development; it can help a community to maintain their own languages in a generation by generation (David, 2008:218). In a family where the parents are in an intercultural marriage, the children will speak more than one languages because they are inherited by the parents. Some examples of intermarriage are between Sumatran and Betawi, West Timorese and Papuan, and Su

matran- Javanese. The well-known examples are Indonesian artists such as Cinta Laura, Stephen William, Rianti Cartwright, etc. who come from intermarriage parents. They can speak more than one languages including Indonesian, and English. Some of them even can speak more than two languages because of the influence by other family members such as grandparents or other relatives who come from different ethnics or nationalities.

The intermarriage is the result of acculturation which causes both bilingualism and multilingualism. Other results beside intermarriage are migration, intermarriages, economic, social, political, and demographic factors (Holmes, 2008). In Indonesia, a case bilingualism is not as common as multilingualism because of the diversity of the society. Lubuklinggau, as mentioned previously, is one of the areas with multicultural and multilingualism which lead to a complex issue to the language use and choice. These two phenomena, then, will possibly affect the attitude of the language speakers in using and choosing the codes. What attitude that the speakers from intermarriage parents have in choosing and using the languages? Is it negative or positive? Do they maintain their parents' languages?

There are some studies that investigated the linguistic phenomena of the languages speakers in intermarriage community. Kouritzin (2000) and Mejia (2014) explained about the role of women as wives and mothers in supporting their male partners' language spoken in the family or by their children. However, this role of the mothers did not cover the role of the fathers/husbands as the ones who dominate in the family. Husbands/fathers first language has become the primary language inherited to the children as well as spoken by the mothers (Winter & Paules, 2005). Gender domination in intermarriage family has given a great effect on the language use, language choice and attitude that may result on language maintenance.

Some studies were looking at these phenomena differently. They stated that intermarriage may cause a positive impact on language maintenance because the parents and the children may continuously speak their first languages (Pebriyati, 2014; David, 2008). However, comparing to the explanation previously, dealing with the gender domination in affecting the language maintenance, the scope and the perspective of looking at this problem may be different. In case of gender domination, it probably causes 'injustice' treatment when the mothers/wives first language is a bit forgotten and treating to be the secondary. Describing the maintenance, it has to be related to the language choice and use among the speakers in a wider purpose.

This situation is also common in Lubuklinggau for this area is occupied by multicultural ethnics as likely happens in other many parts of Indonesia. Lubuklinggau is a small city with many different ethnicity and cultural background of people. Many languages are spoken in Lubuklinggau. Based on Central Bureau of Statistic Republic of Indonesia (2017) at least there are 86 different ethnics in Lubuklinggau which come from many regions in Indonesia. The highest number of intermarriage is Sumatran-Javanese since both ethnics are the two highest populations in Lubuklinggau. It can be said that the language speakers in Lubuklinggau are mostly multilingual.

In the off-record situations that mostly occur, most of children are shy and uncomfortable in using parents' first language. The domination of fathers' first language cannot be proven as the fact. It needs more investigation to support the statements. Unfortunately, there are still insufficient data to support this research and to compare it to the previous research to set a clear understanding on the language use, attitude and maintenance in intermarriage families. The case of multilingualism in the intermarriage families proved to be the way to inherit parents' first languages according to some researches. Therefore, the significance of the research was to explain more about the term

of maintenance which corresponds to the language choice and attitude of the speakers in intermarriage families (children, fathers and mothers).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

In this research, the researcher conducted a descriptive qualitative research. The research was conducted in Lubuklinggau city for about two months. The subject of the research was 100 people that were chosen by purposive sampling including 38 mothers, 30 fathers and 32 children. In collecting the data, interview and questionnaire were used by the researchers.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

After the researcher conducted this research around a month by spreading questionnaires and interview among 100 respondents which were involved in intermarriage Sumatran-Javanese community in Lubuklinggau. The researcher found the domain and language choice that intermarriage Sumatran-Javanese members communicated each other in their daily life. Some factors that determined language choice among Sumatran-Javanese community were also found. Finally, the languages that they chose determined and reflected the language attitude toward their first languages by fathers and mothers maintenance as well as children maintenance.

#### **1. Domain and Language Choice by Sumatran-Javanese Community in Lubuklinggau**

The finding explains about what languages used by Sumatran-Javanese Intermarriage families in some domains such as family, friendship, religion, education, employment, and public domain. The languages that

were included on the lists were the languages that possibly used the most in Lubuklinggau city.

**Table 1. Domain and Language Choice by Sumatran-Javanese Community in Lubuklinggau**

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Palembang Malay Lubuklinggau dialect (PMLD)</b>	<b>Col Language</b>	<b>Javanese Language</b>	<b>Indonesia Language</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Other</b>
Family	54	42	53	28	2	3
Friendship	86	29	29	31	5	1
Religion	40	13	14	74	3	-
Education	32	7	9	80	3	-
Employment	21	7	6	57	5	-
Public	37	9	13	56	3	-

## **2. Factors that Determine Language Choice among Inter-marriage Sumatran- Javanese Families in Lubuklinggau**

After collecting the language choice and domain, it was important to find out why they tend to choose the languages and where the place in using them. The questionnaire was made by adapting some theories from Holmes (2008:25), and Qawar & Dweik (2015) consist of 15 items of statements in form of dual choice YES/NO.

**Table 2. Factors that Determine Language Choice among Sumatran- Javanese Community in Lubuklinggau**

No	Statements	Yes	No
1	I use a language because I want to show my identity	71	29
2	I use a language because most of my friends are descendants of the native speaker of that language	71	29
3	I use a language because in my community most people	81	19
4	I use a language to balance my interlocutor	85	15
5	I use a language based on the situation where I have been	85	15
6	I use a language because most of my family and relatives are descendant of native speaker of that language	82	18
7	I use a language because my parents always use that language at home	77	23
8	I use a language because my workplace/school uses that language	86	14
9	I use a language based on the topic	79	21
10	I use a language because I want to make the topic I am talking clearer	83	17
11	I use a language because I want to sound more polite in speaking	85	15
12	I use a language because of the level of intimacy toward the interlocutor	80	20
13	I use a language based on the purpose and the function of the use of that language (presentation/public speaking/humor).	86	14
14	I use a language based on who the interlocutor is	86	14
15	I use a language because my job/profesion forces me to use that language	70	30

### 3. Language Attitude among Intermarriage Sumatran-Javanese

The participant observation, questionnaire analysis and interview were conducted to collect the data about language attitude of Intermarriage Sumatran-Javanese. The research concerned on the attitude toward Sumatran and Javanese as the parents' language where the participants grow. According to Chaer there are positive and negative attitudes of the language speakers.

There are 3 positive attitudes and 3 negative attitudes measured by the loyalty, pride and awareness toward certain languages.

The description of the attitude toward the first languages in the family are explained into three points of view including fathers, mothers and children. By the analysis of the language choice and domain, the family members prefer to use the *linguafranca* PMLD in family and friendship domain. Between fathers and mothers, they also use PMLD instead of fathers/mothers first languages. They also speak to their children using PMLD. It means, they show negative attitude on the loyalty and awareness in a casual and intimate relationship. However, it cannot be simply mentioned that they are proud or not toward the first languages in these domains.

In non-casual domains, such as education, religion, employment and other public domains, the attitude in choosing the first languages are worse. The most languages are used in these domains dominated by Indonesian language and followed by PMLD. It can be concluded that in some non-casual domains, the language attitude toward fathers/mothers first language is negative including not loyal, less awareness and pride to the languages.

Finally the attitude toward Javanese or *Col* language in intermarriage Javanese-Sumatran families in Lubuklinggau did not show a significant effort by the family members in maintaining parents' first languages.

## **Discussion**

### **1. Language Choice and Attitude toward Parents' First Language in Intermarriage Families**

By the result of the findings, it can be interpreted that among intermarriage Sumatran-Javanese community, Indonesian language and PMLD had the highest number of speakers. Those two languages were chosen almost in every domain. It showed that all intermarriage Sumatran-Javanese community could speak Indonesian language and PMLD. It was also

described that the most dominant language that spoken by intermarriage Sumatran-Javanese in lubuklinggau for the social interaction were PMLD and Indonesian language. It can be seen that *lingua franca* plays an important part on language choice in intermarriage Sumatran- Javanese. *Lingua Franca* is described as a language used as the tool of communication between different linguistic group in multilingual speech community (Holmes, 1992:86). *Lingua franca* that used by intermarriage Sumatran-Javanese in Lubuklinggau was Indonesian language and PMLD.

In formal domain such as education, religion, employment and public, most respondents answered Indonesian language as the language to speak. Meanwhile, PMLD was answered as language chosen in informal situation such as family and friendship. There were also individuals who used the other languages, Batak, Sundanese and Lahat which were used by the respondents in Family domain and the other language, namely Minang which was used by the respondents in friendship domain.

According to data presentation, parents' first languages, *Col* language and Javanese Language, were only used dominantly in family domain. It shows a very small scope on children usage of their parents' first languages. Besides, there are still other groups who speak other than their parents' first language such as PMLD and Indonesian language. PMLD shows 54 speakers, *Col* language shows 42 speakers, Javanese shows 53 speakers, Indonesian language shows 28 speakers and 5 speakers speak other languages.

This finding finally proved that there was a negative attitude toward their parents' languages as they were supposed to be. Deciding it as a negative attitude is not that simple. Determining the language attitudes in intermarriage is a bit complicated since there are two languages and two speakers. The domination may cause a different result of which language that will be inherited to the children. Torsh (2020:35-37) explained some studies mentioned about



teaching or inheriting parents' first language. Gender role of the parents is an influencing factor (case of masculinity and femininity). It corresponds to the masculinity of the fathers in the family which lead the status of dominating first language. Fathers' language became the language that was inherited to the children. However, some studies did not include the fathers' behavior in the parental system although fathers gave his important role in it.

The status of masculinity of the fathers led the mothers to also maintain their male partners' first language. In the case of Kouritzin (2000) study, gender made women responsible to language maintenance even they are the second language speakers and their husbands are the first language speakers. In the case of Hispanic mothers in Australia who married with English-speaking fathers, these immigrant mothers were proven to be good in language maintaining (Mejia, 2014). They saw the importance of bilingualism.

Furthermore, in some previous studies of different intermarriage ethnic case presented the different attitude dealing with masculinity. German and Greek migrants in Australia have different ways in the case of language maintenance dealing with fathers' role (Winter & Paules in Torsh, 2020). German fathers and sons avoided the use of Germany for the reason of threatening their masculinity while Greeks are more supportive in language maintenance. Yet, whether it is threatening or supportive, male masculinity still took primary role of domination, which is take control of the language use.

In Lubuklinggau, the case of masculine domination was not proved. In many cases, the first language spoken by the children from Javanese-Sumatran intermarriages 42 was Col language and 53 was Javanese as the first language spoken in family domain. It proved that 95 respondents showed no difference in using fathers or mothers' first language. Masculinity of the fathers was not dominating the language choice of the children as well as fathers or mothers. Most of the families used PMLD at home in speaking to children or parent to

parent. They also regularly speak PMLD in neighborhood as well as friendship domain.

Correspond to Chaer and Agustina (2010) theory of language attitude, this attitude includes as negative attitude toward parents' language and showing less effort in maintenance. Some of the members speak parents' first language only at home and friendship (intimate relationship) but many of them used the second language PMLD outside of those domains. It proved that they were not loyal, and no pride to speak them in front of public. Dealing with awareness, they said they were pretty aware to the first languages but they couldn't use it because other people didn't use it. Therefore, it cannot be said as the form of awareness because they still felt ashamed in using them in public domain.

The findings finally contradicted to some researches that stated positive first language maintenance in some intermarriage families. However, in this research, the function of the first language is shifted by the existence of the *Linguafranca* PMLD influenced by some factors mentioned below.

## **2. Some Influencing Factors in Choosing Languages**

There are some influencing factors when the languages speakers from an intermarriage family speak to others.

The first factor is showing identity. It clearly described that 71 admitted that they use certain language because they want to show their identity yet there were only 42 respondents answered that they used Col language and there were only 53 respondents answered they used Javanese at home. Both Col language and Javanese language were supposed to be the languages that show intermarriage Sumatran-Javanese's but the total number of the respondents who could speak both of their parents' language were low. Even though the children who can speak parents' first language were low,

a few of them still had their pride to their parents' language. They still used it in family domain and friendship domain.

The second factor is environmental force. It can be said as natural force and habit because of the neighborhood habit by one surrounding. Simply if someone lives in a Javanese speakers community, he/she can speak Javanese because of the input that he/she receives is Javanese. In this intermarriage case, both parents and children receive language input from their closest people such as relatives and neighbors.

The third factor is the community and workplace force. The informants agreed that they chose certain languages due to the social force by the community where they live and work. They chose the linguafranca PMLD and Indonesian language in the formal and informal situation because those were the dominant languages in public domain. In fact, dominant language can also influence language choice because of its function that can provide greater advantage, economic benefits, social network expansion and better opportunities (Qawar & Dwik, 2015:4). Furthermore, people tend to use community language due to practical, political and economic reason (David, 2008:220). Using community language will give more benefits to the speakers and it can influence their language choice because it may help them to expand their social network (Qawar & Dweik, 2015:5).

The fourth factor is participant. A language speaker chooses a language because of the participants. Participant is one of the factors influence the speaker to choose certain languages depends on the who is speaking and who are they speaking to (Holmes, 1992:12).

The fifth factor is setting. Setting or social context could determine the language choice among intermarriage Sumatran-Javanese community in Lubuklinggau. Setting or social context of the interaction determined intermarriage Sumatran-Javanese community to choose certain language in a

conversation. Social context of interaction refers to the situational and conditional context where the conversation took place. Social context influences language choice, it refers to where are respondents' speaking (Holmes, 1992:12). For instance, Sumatran- Javanese chose different language at different place. The language choice at school might be different from the language choice at home.

The sixth factor is topic. Language choice can be influenced by several factors like the topic, social scene, relative status, aspiration and feeling of identity (Qawar & Dweik, 2015:5). The more casual topic is the more informal the language that they chose. In this case, the first languages (Javanese and Col) and PMLD were chosen as the informal language to discuss more causal topic of conversation.

The seventh factor is language status or prestige. The informants stated that they chose to speak the language because of the prestige of the language. The High language will be most preferred than the Low. In the research, the parents' first languages considered to be Low than the *Linguafranca* and Indonesian language. Therefore, it is more polite and more prestige if they use them in education, religion, employment and other public domain. As mentioned by Holmes (1992:12), formality scale is one of social dimension that influenced language choice and it relates to the setting or type of interaction. The scale also considered the formality of the language which finally force them to the public need in speaking other languages than their first languages.

Another scale influenced the language choice is the status scale. Status scale concerned with participant relationship and it is included in social dimension why people choose certain language (Holmes, 1992: 12). It can be said that the relationship between the speaker and interlocutor determined the language choice of the speaker.

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that PMLD is as the most spoken language in Family and Friendship domain. Meanwhile, Indonesian language has the highest number of speakers in religion, education, employment and public domain. It also shows that situational context between formal and informal situation plays an important role for the intermarriage Sumatran-Javanese choosing certain language. Family and friendship tend to be used in informal situational context while religion, education, employment and public domain tend to be formal situational context.

Correspond to the result of the language choice, it can be stated that the speakers in intermarriage families presented a negative attitude toward the parents' first language both Javanese and *Col* language. It influences the language maintenance of both languages in which they showed insignificant effort to regularly and simultaneously use them in different domains. Thus, it breaks some theories that mention a positive attitude toward the language maintenance started from family domain in intermarriage case.

Moreover, the most influenced factor that determine language choice among intermarriage Sumatran-Javanese Community in Lubuklinggau were to show identity, the effect of environmental force, the effect of community and workplace force, participants and setting, topic and language status/prestige. The factors support that the speakers, especially children, has a negative attitude toward parents' first languages.

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